

COLLEGE & CAREER GUIDE



Journey to College

MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

Are you ready for college and a career?

Students who are ready for college have the knowledge and skills needed to pass entry-level college courses and move on to higher-level courses. Students who are ready for a career are prepared to work toward a specific profession. That work includes completing college or training, earning an industry-recognized credential, or directly entering the workforce.

Recommended high school coursework

Taking challenging high school courses is one of the best ways to prepare for college. Check the specific admissions requirements of the colleges you want to attend. Make sure you're earning the high school credits you'll need. The Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development and many of the state's colleges and universities recommend the following high school coursework:

English/Language arts	4 Units
Physical education	1 Unit
Health education	0.5 Units
Personal finance	0.5 Units
Social studies	3 Units
Mathematics	4 Units*
Science	3 Units
Fine arts	1 Unit
Electives	4 Units

*Currently 3 units of math are required for high school graduations; however 4 are recommended for college readiness.

Remedial and corequisite education classes

Working hard in high school is the best way to prepare for college-level courses. Colleges may require students who arrive unprepared for difficult coursework to take remedial or developmental education classes. These classes help students strengthen their skills, but they do not count towards a student's college credits, so it's important to finish these classes as soon as possible. Taking a remedial course will increase the amount of time and money required to complete a degree. Many Missouri colleges now offer what are called "corequisite," which students take while taking other corresponding classes for college credit. These corequisite courses offer support and strategies to help students succeed as they work toward graduation.

Colleges consider numerous factors when determining which students need to enroll in developmental or corequisite classes. Those factors include college admissions exam scores, like ACT or SAT scores, high school GPA, performance in specific high school courses, and other measures.

Registered Apprenticeships

A great way to gain valuable experience and explore careers while still in high school is to participate in a registered youth apprenticeship program. Apprenticeships offer education, on-the-job training, and a paycheck from day one. Ask your counselor about opportunities in your area or visit [MoApprenticeConnect.com](https://moapprenticeshipconnect.com).

Registered Apprenticeships are a viable path to an industry-recognized credential or certificate in many occupations, including IT, healthcare, teacher education, and the skilled trades. With more than 175 different occupations offering Registered Apprenticeships in Missouri, students and adults can enroll in an apprenticeship before, during, and even after college. For additional information or questions, contact apprenticeship@dhewd.mo.gov or visit jobs.mo.gov/moapprenticeships.

Take the ACT and/or SAT

Some colleges require students to take a college admissions exam, such as the ACT or SAT. Some colleges have transitioned to test-optional, but ACT and SAT scores often are paired with your GPA to determine scholarship eligibility.

Before you take these tests, prepare yourself to do your best. Learn how the tests are scored and take advantage of free test prep programs. Check out the free ACT (www.act.org/content/act/en/products-and-services/the-act/test-preparation/free-act-test-prep.html) and SAT (sat.collegeboard.org/practice) practice test questions and test-taking tips.

If you are not satisfied with your score the first time around, you can retake the tests through June or July of your senior year, depending on the guidelines of the scholarship or college. If you need help paying for the ACT or SAT, ask your counselor about exam fee waivers.

EXPLORE CAREER OPTIONS

An important part of planning for college is considering the type of career you would like to pursue. Your plans for the future will help determine the type of college you will want to attend and the kind of degree you will need to earn.

Consider all the possibilities

You can learn about hundreds of career options, potential salary levels, and the type of education you will need on the MoSCORES website (scorecard.mo.gov/Search) or at Missouri Connections (missouriconnections.org). Missouri Connections includes a variety of information, including “career cluster” videos to help you identify areas of interest related to your academic abilities and talents. Take your research a step further by visiting meric.mo.gov to look at career projections and salaries for the types of jobs you’re interested in.

What do you want to do?

After you have spent some time exploring options, begin to narrow your choices. Evaluate your knowledge and skills. Think about past experiences and classes you have enjoyed. Consider careers related to the things that interest you the most. Once you have identified several possibilities, find out what kind of education is required.

SUPERSCORING IS HERE!

For students taking the ACT more than once, the highest scores of each section of each test will be combined for a Superscore. ACT scores must be sent to the Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development (MDHEWD) to be considered for Bright Flight. Students can send their scores to MDHEWD by entering the code 2379 when they register for their ACT. If a student would like their Superscore considered for Bright Flight, they can log into their ACT account and add the 2379 registration code for a small fee.

NOTE: The Bright Flight eligibility scores also increased with the class of 2023 seniors. Students will need to score a 32 to qualify for up to \$3,000 or a 31 to qualify for up to \$1,000.



Learn more about planning for college:

journeytocollege.mo.gov

APPLY TO COLLEGE

There is no magic formula for choosing the right college. Knowing yourself — your abilities, interests, and goals — can help you find a college that is the best fit for you.

Consider applying to more than one college so you have options when you are ready to make a final decision. Each college has its own admission and scholarship deadlines, so be sure to research those and mark them on your calendar.

Weigh your options

Higher education offers many options — four year universities, two-year community colleges, certificate programs, and vocational, technical, and trade schools. They all count as college.

You can explore most public and independent colleges in Missouri and the programs they offer at collegesearch.mo.gov.

Make sure the schools you are considering offer the degree you are seeking. Other things to ask yourself include:

- Do I want to stay close to home, or would I rather experience a new community?
- Would I like to attend a large university, or would I prefer a smaller campus?
- Will I need any extra help, such as a writing center or tutoring services?
- What kind of housing, transportation, and recreational facilities are available?
- What is the cost and what kind of financial assistance is available?
- Does the college participate in state and federal financial aid programs?

Get the answers you need

Most colleges and universities provide detailed information on their websites. If you do not find the information you need, contact the college's admissions office to get your questions answered.

College fairs are also a great way to gather information while visiting with multiple college representatives. Be sure to pick up brochures and admissions applications from colleges that interest you.

Visit campuses

One of the best ways to ensure you find a college that is right for you is to visit the campus. Some high schools allow students to take excused absences to go on college visits during the school day.

The campus atmosphere may be your deciding factor in choosing a college.

While visiting:

- Meet with an admissions counselor
- Meet with a financial aid representative
- Attend a class
- Visit a dorm room
- Eat in a dining hall
- Talk with students

If you are unable to physically visit a campus, many colleges offer virtual campus tours online and have representatives at college fairs to answer questions.

Find the best fit

To learn more about finding a college that is the best fit for you, visit journeytocollege.mo.gov/plan/explore-colleges-careers. Use the college fit worksheet to compare your top college choices in several key areas or use the fillable pdf online at journeytocollege.mo.gov/plan/apply/find-the-best-fit/.

Apply Missouri

Many high schools in Missouri host Apply Missouri events in September and October to help seniors submit college admissions applications to colleges they are interested in attending.

To see if your school will be hosting Apply Missouri, visit journeytocollege.mo.gov/apply-missouri/sites.

Even if your school does not participate, check out the student resources at journeytocollege.mo.gov/apply-missouri/ for information that can help you apply to college.

Journey to College

APPLY MISSOURI

COLLEGE FIT

There are many factors to keep in mind when choosing the right college for you. Use this chart to compare those factors before making a final decision. Get the online version at journeytocollege.mo.gov/plan/apply/find-the-best-fit/.

	School 1	School 2	School 3
School name			
School website			
School type (2-year, 4-year, vocational)			
Student body size			
Location, in-state/out-of-state			
School setting (urban, rural)			
Distance from home			
Degree types offered (associate, bachelor's, master's)			
Majors I'm interested in	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.	1. 2. 3.
Admissions contact	Name: Phone: Email:	Name: Phone: Email:	Name: Phone: Email:
Admission requirements	ACT/SAT: GPA:	ACT/SAT: GPA:	ACT/SAT: GPA:
On-campus housing?	☐ Available ☐ Not available	☐ Available ☐ Not available	☐ Available ☐ Not available
Deposit amount			
Deposit due date			
Campus services open and available during holidays?			
Questions to ask			

PAYING FOR COLLEGE

Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)	School code: School deadline:	School code: School deadline:	School code: School deadline:
Estimated cost of attendance			
Available scholarships (institutional and private)	Name: Deadline:	Name: Deadline:	Name: Deadline:
	Name: Deadline:	Name: Deadline:	Name: Deadline:
	Name: Deadline:	Name: Deadline:	Name: Deadline:
Available financial aid (grants, work-study, loans)			
Emergency funds	☐ Available ☐ Not available	☐ Available ☐ Not available	☐ Available ☐ Not available

SERVICES FOR STUDENTS

[illegible]

COLLEGE COST COMPARISON

It's important to consider costs when choosing the right college for you. Use this chart to compare tuition rates, fees, and your financial aid offers before making a final decision. Get the online version at <https://dhewd.mo.gov/media/pdf/college-cost-comparison-worksheet>.

	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4
School name				
Federal school code				
FAFSA deadline				
Estimated cost of attendance (COA)				
Tuition and fees				
Room and board				
Books and supplies				
Transportation				
Miscellaneous/personal				
Additional costs				
Total cost of attendance				
Estimated financial need				
Total cost of attendance				
Student Aid Index (SAI)				
Total financial need				
Estimated financial aid (grants, scholarships and tuition assistance)				
Federal Pell Grant				
Federal SEOG Grant				
Federal TEACH Grant				
Institutional aid				
Missouri state aid				
Private scholarships				
Veterans educational benefits				
Education & Training Voucher (ETV)				
MO Reach				
MO Credential Completion & Employment				
Other				
Employment				
Federal Work Study				
Other				
Loans				
Federal Direct Subsidized Loan				
Federal Direct Unsubsidized Loan				
Federal Direct PLUS Loan				
Institutional Loan				
Private Loan				
Other				
Total financial aid				
Estimated out-of-pocket cost				
Total cost of attendance				
— Total financial aid				
= Total out-of-pocket cost				

DECISION DAY

Many high schools in Missouri host Decision Day activities in April and May to help you finalize your plans for the future and celebrate your decision to attend college, start a job or an apprenticeship, or enter the military.

If you are still interested in attending college but you haven't applied or been accepted into college, talk with your school counselor to learn about options that are still available. It is not too late to submit your FAFSA, complete verification, or to find a school or degree program that is right for you.

Even if your school does not participate in Decision Day, you and your classmates can join the celebration by posting your plans on social media using #MODecisionDay, #IDecided, or #Class of 2025. To see if your high school will be hosting a Decision Day event, visit journeytocollege.mo.gov/decision-day/.

STUDENTS' RIGHT TO KNOW

Look for new information and data to be posted to the journeytocollege.mo.gov website that can help you make an informed college decision.

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DECISION DAY



STUDENT STORIES: XZAVIER

CHECKLIST: PAYING FOR COLLEGE

- ☐ Plan for all college-related costs
- ☐ Learn about financial aid
- ☐ Apply for scholarships throughout high school and college
- ☐ **File your FAFSA before the Feb. 1.** Access Missouri priority deadline each year you plan to enroll. **The Final Deadline for Access Missouri is April 1.**
- ☐ Work part time to help with expenses
- ☐ Only borrow what you need
- ☐ Know what you owe and what your payments will be



"The biggest things I wish I would have known were about applying for financial aid every year and time management. It's easy to put things off so you need to have your time scheduled out."

Hometown: Texas

School: Lincoln University

Major: Computer Science

FINALIZING YOUR PLANS

Finalizing your plans is key to successfully making the transition to college. Choosing a college to attend is the first step in following through on your plans to earn a degree.

Once you decide where you will attend school, there are a number of details to work out, including housing, meals, and transportation.

NARROW YOUR OPTIONS

Finding the right fit for college is important, so narrowing down your choices as the time draws near to register is essential. Potential students should be doing this around January in order to be ready for the fall semester. Think about the qualities that are most important to you so you can make an informed decision. The college fit worksheet (online at journeytocollege.mo.gov/plan/apply/find-the-best-fit/) can help you finalize your choice.

Compare costs

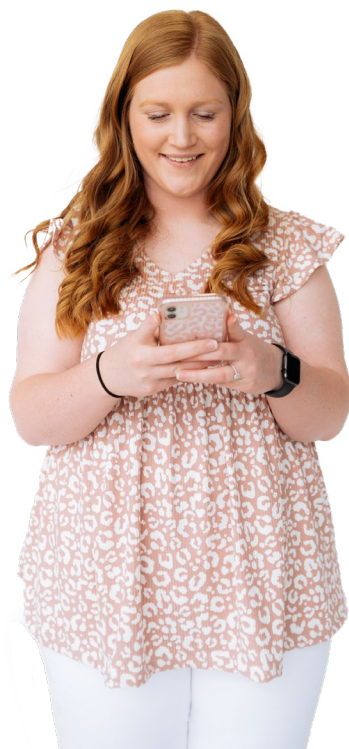
Once you receive college financing offers from the schools where you have been accepted, you can estimate how much you will pay for your education. Think about the full cost of finishing your degree, not just getting through your first year. Note the scholarships that are renewable and those that won't carry over into your sophomore year.

Federal law requires every college and university to provide a Net Price Calculator on its website. The net price is the amount you can expect to pay after subtracting grants and scholarships.

You can compare financial aid packages by using the college cost comparison worksheet (online at dhewd.mo.gov/media/pdf/college-cost-comparison-worksheet). Be sure to take costs into consideration when making your final decision.

Make your final choice

After finalizing your college choice, be sure to notify the school you will be attending as well as the schools you were accepted to, but will not be attending. Colleges usually want to know if you plan to enroll for the fall semester by May 1.





HOUSING, MEALS, AND TRANSPORTATION

Once you have decided on a college, you will need to arrange for all those other details to make sure you get enrolled and have your bases covered. Think about transportation, housing, meals, childcare, and any other schedules, people or things you may need to adjust or arrange for.

Some four-year colleges require students to live in a dorm their freshman year unless they will be living at home. If you need services during holidays or the summer, make sure you're choosing a dorm that offers that availability. If you're not planning to live on campus but will be moving for school, check with your school's admissions office for recommendations on affordable housing options.

Be sure you sign and return your housing contract or lease early so you will have a place to stay when the school year begins.

Most colleges offer meal plans at their dining halls. Be sure to consider all your options and sign up for a meal plan you will use. Even if you aren't living on campus, that doesn't mean you can't have a meal plan. If you plan to be on campus for long periods of time, you may consider a smaller plan that works best for your schedule.

If you do not have a car or will not be taking it with you to college, be sure to research transportation options so you have a reliable way to travel back and forth from home to campus, get to your job, medical appointments, volunteer hours, etc.

WORKING WHILE IN SCHOOL

A job can help offset some of your college costs and help you with expenses not covered by scholarships or other financial aid. Having a job during college also is a great way to build your resumé and gain experience. Many students are able to attend college full time and work at least part-time. Colleges and universities often have student jobs available on campus that may offer more flexible schedules to accommodate your classes. Find resources on your campus to help you secure a job that works best for your situation.

STUDENT STORIES: DARA



"Everyone tells you to get involved, but until you actually do it, you don't understand how important it is. Get out of your room and attend activities. It's made a big difference for me."

Hometown: St. Joseph, MO

School: Missouri Western State University

Major: Nursing

A photograph of a student with long brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt and blue jeans, sitting on a green lawn. They are holding a silver laptop. In the background, there is a blurred orange and white object, possibly a car or a building, and a brick building. The image is split vertically, with the left side having a dark blue overlay containing text.

STUDENT STORIES: SARAH

"I decided on UMKC because of the strong medical sciences and their diverse population. It's a great environment and opportunity to expand my network. Attending a school out-of-state was daunting at first, but it's been amazing."

Hometown: Cape Coral, Florida

School: University of Missouri - KC

Major: Liberal Arts



Missouri Department of Higher Education & Workforce Development

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For the latest information, visit dhewd.mo.gov or studentaid.gov.

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